

**Expat Counter**

**Citizens of the European Union, EEA citizens and Swiss nationals**

Reporting and registering as an expat in the City of Ghent

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***This text contains links to information pages and examples of residence documents (indicated by an Internet icon in the margin).***

Who can the Expat Counter help?

The Expat Counter is intended for persons who do not have the Belgian nationality, have their main place of residence in Ghent and are labour migrants in accordance with the Residence Act. Labour migrants are those who work in Belgium as knowledge workers (researchers, visiting professors, trainees, high-skilled staff, executives, etc.), athletes (or attendants) or stage artists (or attendants).

The expat’s relatives can register simultaneously at the Expat Counter. They must have their main place of residence in Ghent and submit the required documents. Third-country relatives must have a type D visa in order to register at the Expat Counter.

The Expat Counter processes the residence application faster than the regular counter thanks to registration by email, faster residence check, etc. Expats can also initiate their residence procedure at the regular counter. Once made, their decision is final.

The Expat Counter currently does not handle any applications for renewal of the residence card.

The procedure varies depending on the expat’s nationality. This brochure deals with expats who are citizens of the European Union, EEA citizens or Swiss nationals.

Although these expats are exempted from visa requirements, they must be able to prove their identity by means of an identity card, passport or other document proving their right to free movement.

The expat will receive an invitation to go to the counter. Expats who reside in the centre of Ghent have to report to the Expat Counter in the EGW building (former library, next to the former AC Zuid). Expats who reside in one of the submunicipalities have to report to the local service centre (dienstencentrum).

Stay of maximum 3 months (short stay)

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This application applies to citizens of the EU, EEA citizens and Swiss nationals who will be working and residing in Belgium for **no more than 3 months** from their date of entry. They have to request a [Notification of Presence (Melding van Aanwezigheid) (Annex 3ter)](https://dofi.ibz.be/sites/dvzoe/NL/Documents/Bijlage_03_03.pdf).

This is not required for expats staying at a hotel. The hotel will report their presence.

This registration procedure does not result in relocation of their main place of residence (domicile) to Belgium.

## How to apply for a Notification of Presence (Annex 3ter)?

The expat's contact has to send an email to expats@stad.gent within 10 working days from the expat's arrival in Belgium. This registration email contains the following information:

* subject: Annex 3ter
* expat's surname and given names
* expat’s nationality
* correct and complete residence address in Ghent
* arrival date and duration of stay in Belgium

Include a scan of an entry document (identity card, passport or any other proof of right to free movement).

Later on, the expat will receive an invitation by email from their contact to make an appointment, bring the required documents to the Expat Counter in the EGW building or, depending on the place of residence, a service centre and collect Annex 3ter.

When collecting Annex 3ter, the expat should bring:

* identity card, passport or any other proof of right to free movement
* correct and complete residence address

*Annex 3ter is delivered free of charge and passport photographs are not required.*

Stay exceeding 3 months (long stay)

EU citizens, EEA citizens or Swiss nationals who will be working in Belgium for more than 3 months should apply for registration. A visa is never required. The expat will receive a type EU electronic registration document.

## How to apply for the EU card?

The expat's contact has to send an email to expats@stad.gent within three months from the expat's arrival in Belgium.

This registration email contains the following information:

* expat's surname and given names
* expat’s nationality
* country and city of residence prior to their arrival in Belgium
* date of arrival in Belgium
* correct and complete residence address in Ghent
* telephone number and presence/absence times for the residence check
* duration of employment in Belgium

Include a scan of:

* + a valid entry document (identity card, passport or any other proof of right to free movement).
	+ proof of employment valid for three months or more (possibly employer certificate or hosting agreement)



The registration procedure will take some time. The type EU electronic registration document cannot be delivered instantly. Expats should therefore start the registration procedure as soon as possible. However, it is important to arrange for adequate housing in advance. If the expat does not have a residence address for at least two months, it is best to postpone the registration procedure.

Expats should put their name on the doorbell and the letter box in a clear manner so as to make it easier for the police to perform residence checks.

The expat’s contact will receive a registration confirmation email when the file is opened. The expat receives the annex 19 and annex 8ter through email. This document is a brief summary of the registration process and all the documents that were submitted. The annex 8ter is a temporary residence document.

The expat is immediately registered in the waiting register. A community police officer will perform the residence check later on. On average, this residence check is performed within five weeks from registration.

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The authorized community police officer can be found on<http://www.lokalepolitie.be/5415/contact/je-wijk>.

If the community police officer does not find the expat at their residence address, he/she will drop a residence check card in the letterbox.

A positive residence check is followed by registration in the foreign nationals register.

If the residence check is negative, the registration application will be rejected. The expat’s contact will be informed by email.

As soon as the application dossier has been fully processed, the Expat Counter or the competent service centre will invite the expat by email to complete the registration and to apply for a registration document (EU card).

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When applying for the EU card, the expat will submit the following:

* valid entry document (identity card or passport or any other proof of right to free movement)
* proof of employment (employer certificate - Annex 19bis or employment contract or hosting agreement)
* foreign driving license, if applicable
* if applicable, sworn translation of the expat's birth certificate (legalised or endorsed with an apostille if required)
* personal invitation email
* 25 EUR (fee for the E card)
* 1 recent passport photograph that meets the [quality criteria](http://www.ibz.rrn.fgov.be/fileadmin/user_upload/nl/kaarten/eid/documentatie/2016_Matrice_NL.pdf)
* any additional documents listed in the invitation email

![C:\Users\taeyebr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\SY0KBJ2O\internet_640[1].png]()The EU card can be collected once the expat has received the PIN / PUK codes. The EU card can only be collected at the office that issued it. The expat will need to make [an appointment](https://stad.gent/nl/burgerzaken/online-afspraak-maken/online-appointments-migration-counter-or-service-centre) to collect the residence card.

When collecting the EU card, the expat should bring:

* Temporary residence document (annex 8ter)
* PIN/PUK codes

## Validity period of the EU card

The EU card is valid for five years on condition that the expat continues to comply with the residence conditions as an expat.

After five years of uninterrupted residence, a permanent right of residence can be applied for (EU+ card). This will result in an unconditional and permanent right of residence.

*Always report any* ***change of address*** *immediately to the Migration Counter or to a service centre (****even if the registration document is still valid****). Any failure to do so can result in the expat being removed from the foreign nationals register. If this happens, the registration document will become invalid and the expat may lose the right of residence. The expat must then request a re-registration, but the investigation of such an application may take a long time. A new registration document can therefore not be delivered instantly.*

Other expat residence procedures

There are additional residence procedures to obtain the expat status (e.g. cross-border employment, employment in a neighbouring country). More information can be obtained from the Migration Information Centre (Infopunt Migratie).

What to do in case of a temporary or permanent departure from Belgium?

![C:\Users\taeyebr\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\SY0KBJ2O\internet_640[1].png]()Expats who are temporarily or permanently moving to another country must report their departure to the Migration Counter or competent service centre.

Click [here](https://stad.gent/nl/burgerzaken/migratie-integratie/niet-belgen/departure-belgium) for more information.

Reporting a lost, stolen or damaged residence document

If a registration document is lost, stolen or destroyed, the expat must notify the police immediately (not the Migration Counter or service centre). The police will issue a certificate (Annex 12) to confirm that the loss, theft or destruction has been reported.

In addition, the expat should have their registration document blocked through Doc Stop (0800 2123 2123).

Finally, the expat must request a duplicate of the registration document from the municipality. The municipality will first check the data in the national register and the passport photograph. The duplicate has the same expiry date as the original residence document.

Who to contact?

 **Loket Expats (Expat Counter)**

**phone**: 09 266 71 50

**e-mail**: expats@stad.gent

**visit**: by appointment

**accessibility and opening hours**:

<https://stad.gent/nl/openingsuren-adressen/dienst-burgerzaken-loket-migratie-expats>

*OR*

[www*.*stad.gent](http://www.stad.gent) > zoeken > Expats

**Infopunt Migratie (Migration Information Centre)**

**phone**: 09 266 71 40

**e-mail**: infopuntmigratie@stad.gent

**visit**: by appointment

**accessibility and opening hours**:

<https://stad.gent/nl/openingsuren-adressen/dienst-burgerzaken-infopunt-migratie>

*OR*

[www*.*stad.gent](http://www.stad.gent) > zoeken > Infopunt Migratie

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**Dienstencentra (Service Centres)**

**Gentbrugge:** 09 268 23 80 of dcgentbrugge@stad.gent

**Wondelgem:** 09 266 85 60 of dcwondelgem@stad.gent

**Nieuw Gent:** 09 268 21 70 of dcnieuwgent@stad.gent

**Sint-Amandsberg:** 09 266 86 86 of dcsintamandsberg@stad.gent

**visit:** by appointment

**accessibility and opening hours**:

<https://stad.gent/nl/openingsuren-adressen/trefwoord/dienstencentra>

*OR*

[www*.*stad.gent](http://www.stad.gent) > zoeken > Dienstencentra